

# La Follette's

WEEKLY MAGAZINE

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## OUR FIRST BIRTHDAY

**W**ITH this number LA FOLLETTE'S enters upon its second year. Volume One is now a closed book. Before laying it aside, however, and opening up Volume Two, we want to spend a few moments with our readers, over matters of mutual concern.

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We know you are interested in LA FOLLETTE'S. We know you want it to succeed; to become a greater power in the struggle for equality of opportunity and decency and honesty in government. The letters you have written us during the year, bearing messages of encouragement and good will, have told us that. The generous help you have given by going among your friends and telling them about the magazine has shown the depth and sincerity of your interest. And there are other proofs. We have in mind a letter from one of our advertisers—a letter, we believe, that will give you as much pleasure as it has given us, for he was referring to you when he said:

"I want to say to you that I gave you the advertising originally as a matter of compliment to your magazine. Results were surprising. The ad was not keyed, but you certainly have a loyal readership, for the correspondents do not fail to mention, 'I saw it in LA FOLLETTE'S.'"

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This interest, this loyalty that you have manifested is the best assurance we have of success. Without it our existence would be brief indeed. With it we shall grow in influence and power. With it we shall become a more effective champion of the Cause in which we are enlisted—your Cause. With it we shall render still greater service as the people's spokesman, for with a mighty army of earnest, intelligent readers behind us we can compel attention when we speak.

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To this community of interest, then, this kinship that has cemented us together into one big family, we largely attribute the remarkable growth of LA FOLLETTE'S. In the twelve months that have passed since the first number appeared, our list of bona fide, paid-up subscriptions has grown to 31,000. Think of what that means. A family of readers 150,000 strong! And scattered throughout every state in the union! The advertising—the bread-winner of every magazine family—has increased, too. There was not a single advertisement in the first number; now we have from two to four pages every week. Best of all, new subscribers and new advertisers are coming to us in greater numbers right now than at any time in the past.

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Surely this is cause for rejoicing.

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Thus encouraged, we look forward to 1910 with confidence. We shall meet with many difficulties. The path we have chosen is not strewn with roses. No magazine or newspaper that sets out to speak fearlessly and truthfully about the wrongs committed in the name of Big Business and Big Politics finds

the way smooth and the profits certain. LA FOLLETTE'S was founded with very limited financial backing in the belief that the people would lend their support to a publication they knew was unsubsidized. One year's experience has strengthened us in this belief. We shall go on getting out the best and most attractive paper that our means will permit, stimulated by the knowledge that there are thousands and ever-increasing thousands of independent, thinking citizens who are with us heart and soul.

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For our own part, we have tried to keep the faith. We have put forth the best there is in us to give our readers a clear idea of the forces at work in the nation, through a weekly magazine that could not be swerved from the plain path of duty. We have been guided in our dealing with men and measures, with organized movements for political and social betterment, with efforts to shake cities and states and the nation free from the grasp of the Interests, solely by our understanding of what would best conserve the public interest. We have endeavored to throw upon the big events of the day the clear light of Truth that our readers may have the most accurate information obtainable about the things in which they, as sovereign citizens, have a vital interest.

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We have had the assistance of many brilliant and famous writers. The articles they have contributed to the pages of LA FOLLETTE'S during the year have been among the best ever written about the problems of Democracy and the new awakening of the social conscience.

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The New Year brings with it new tasks and new responsibilities. There will be much to do. 1909 was a memorable year. Big events crowded one another close and hard upon the arena of public affairs. And the outlook is that 1910 will be written big on the pages of history. Democracy is stirring the world as never before. In England, for instance, the fight led by Lloyd-George to transfer part of the heavy load of taxation from the bread of the poor to the colossal land and liquor monopolies of the lords and to abolish poverty by taxing land into use, seems destined to bring about a revolution in English institutions. In this country the people's fight against Aldrichism and Cannonism in national politics, and corruption and misrepresentation in local politics—against what Judge Lindsey calls "The Beast"—is assuming new proportions. A new Congress will be elected during the year. The fight will come close to you. It is of supreme importance that you be prepared for it and take part in it.

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LA FOLLETTE'S will help you in this fight. It is on your side of this great struggle for Democracy, and it will take a place out on the firing line of every engagement where the main issue is at stake. When the issue is drawn in your district, when it

becomes your duty to enter the contest over the election of a congressman, we shall draw upon every resource at our command to supply you with the ammunition that will help you to win.

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We want this to be a magazine of good cheer. When it is necessary to strike blows in defense of our ideals, we shall hit as hard as we can. But we have ever in mind the one big, joyous fact that at heart the people of this country are sound. In that fact lies the hope of Democracy. Political leaders may go wrong. Machines may be set in operation so complex as to bewilder the voter. But in the end that which is for the good of all will prevail. Isn't that enough to inspire optimism?

## Read This

**I**F YOU would like to read an able and intensely interesting story about the great movement now under way to restore representative government and destroy the combination between Big Business and Big Politics, get a copy of *The Twentieth Century Magazine* for January. William Kittle, who will be remembered by readers of LA FOLLETTE'S for his fearless series of articles on "The Making of Public Opinion," has written for that magazine an article entitled "The Progressive Movement." It is one of the best articles on the rise and spread of this movement we have seen. Its scope is indicated by the following chapter headings:

- I. Brief Introduction.
- II. La Follette and Roosevelt, the First Insurgents.
- III. The Issue—Aldrichism and Cannonism.
  1. How Big Business Controls the Senate.
  2. How Big Business Controls the House.
- IV. The Progressives in Congress.
- V. The Interests Rally to the Defense of Cannon.
- VI. The Ides of March.
  1. The Roll of Honor.
  2. The Roll of Dishonor.
- VII. The Progressives and the Aldrich-Payne Tariff.
- VIII. President Taft and the Progressives.
- IX. The Progressive Movement.
- X. The Progressive Platform.

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## That Postal Deficit

**T**HE FAILURE of the postal revenues to meet the postal expenditures is a subject of perennial discussion. The postal deficit, like the poor, we have always with us. Various plans and departures have been suggested to wipe it out. It has been suggested that the extravagant pay of the railroads for carrying the mails be reduced. But with congressional bosses who would frank back and forth during the mail-weighting period tons of useless public documents for the mere purpose of stuffing the mails and increasing the railroad rake-off, this suggestion never got far.

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It has also been recommended by at least one Postmaster General that the government build and own the railway mail cars instead of paying the railroad more than their total cost annually for the rent of the cars. But this recommendation never received consideration by Congress.

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Then there is the postal savings banks proposition, to which the Republican party is committed. The operation of a postal savings system would increase postal receipts without a corresponding increase in expenses and thus tend to reduce the deficit. But the System is against this "radical" and "socialistic" undertaking and the System Congress has thus far strangled postal savings bank legislation.

Recent disclosures of express company earnings add new and important arguments for a parcels post. It was Postmaster General Wanamaker who said that there were only four reasons why the people could not have a parcels post. These four reasons were the four big express companies.

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The Wells Fargo Express Company in the fiscal year 1909 earned net, after the payment of all expenses and taxes, over 86 per cent. of the total value of all its property, and equipment used in its business, and received in addition \$1,400,000 income from investments of the accumulated profits. It presented its share holders with a special Christmas dividend of 800 per cent. or \$24,000,000.

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The American Express Company has been paying dividends of 6 to 12 per cent. for years, on a capitalization half water; and last year received an income of \$1,178,000 from investments of its additional, accumulated profits.

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The Adams Express Company with a total investment of about \$6,000,000, has, in recent years, in addition to high regular dividends, distributed additional, accumulated profits in special dividends, amounting to \$36,000,000 and last year received from its accumulated profits not yet distributed an income of over \$1,000,000. So that another special distribution dividend of 100 per cent. is about due to the Adams share holders.

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And so we might go on giving the statistics of the extravagant profits of the express carriers. Some of the smaller companies earned last year 200 to 300 per cent. net on their investment.

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The pertinence of these facts in connection with the postal deficit is this: These earnings represent what the public is paying private interests for the transportation of express—freight, parcels, and also mailable matter, and money, transported by the express companies partly in competition with the postal department and probably in contravention of the postal laws of the United States.

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Now the public has little use for the independent express company arrangement. The public wants a parcels post conducted by the government for the transportation of smaller parcels and the railroads should furnish adequate fast freight service for the transportation of such large parcels and shipments as require expedition. A parcels post, established on an honest basis, would give the public better service at lower rates, and yield a revenue that would wipe out the postal deficit. However, a parcels post is not recommended by the present Postmaster General.

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The present Postmaster General calls attention to the postal deficit and recommends an increase of the postage rates on periodicals and magazines to meet the deficit. The present Postmaster General is astute and able and he knows, or he ought to know, that the increase of postage rates on magazines, which he recommends, would not reduce the deficit but would increase it. He knows, or he ought to know, that if such an increase were made the express companies would make arrangements to transport and deliver large, bulky magazines and periodicals at a rate enough lower to get that business, and that they would get it away from the post office. He knows, or he ought to know, that this would result in the loss of a large revenue to the post office without a corresponding reduction in expenses, that only the express companies and the railroads would benefit from the